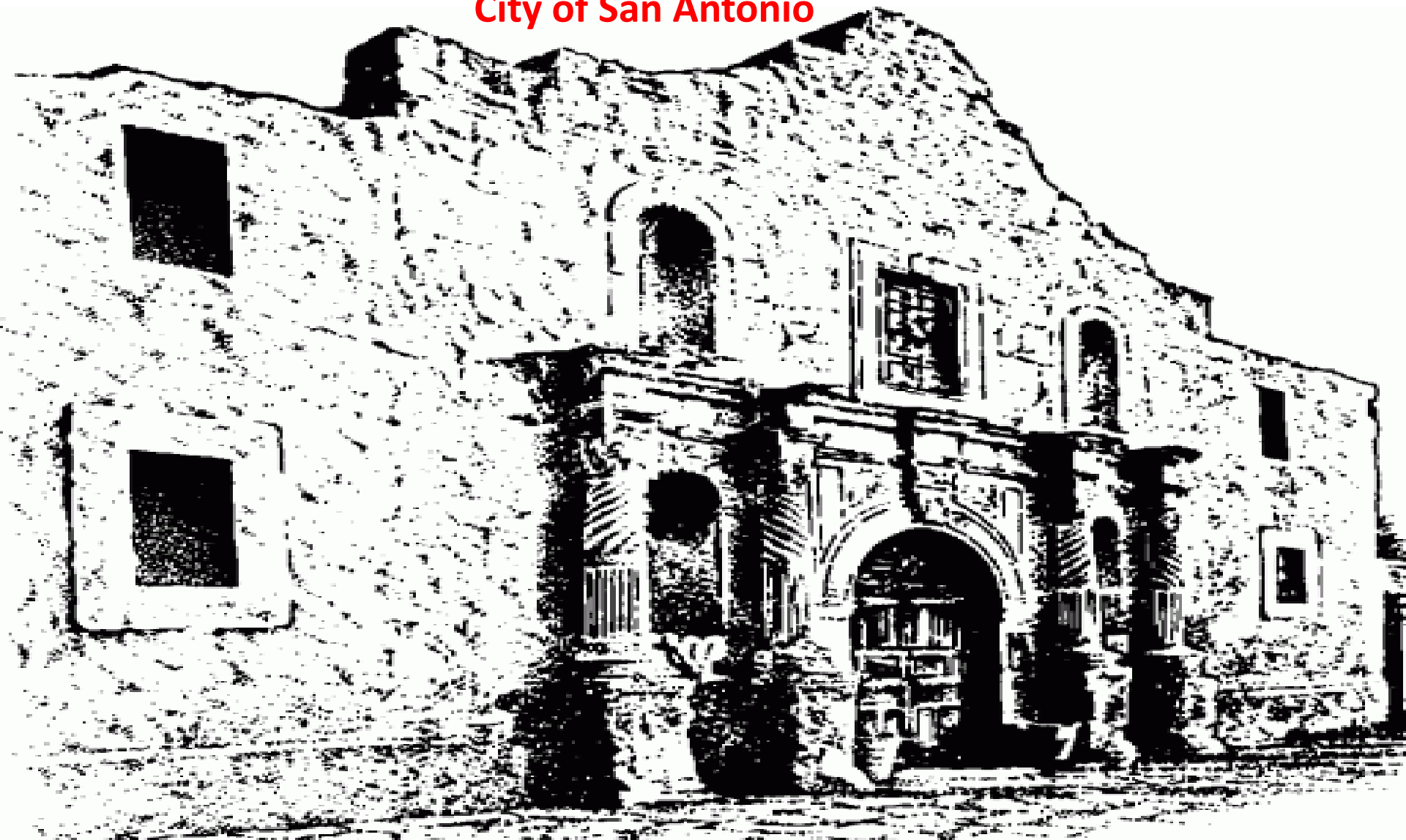


The Alamo:

Preserving the Shrine of Texas Liberty and
the Growth of the
City of San Antonio



The Alamo is where a small group of defenders held off the centralist army of General Antonio Lopez De Santa Anna. The Battle and death of the defenders on the morning of March 6, 1836 has come to symbolize courage and sacrifice for liberty. The grounds and two remaining buildings – the Church and the Long Barracks stand as silent reminders of those who lived and died at the Alamo. Since the Battle, the City of San Antonio has developed around the Alamo. The Office of the City Clerk holds many of the original documents, documenting how the Alamo has changed and developed as the City has grown.

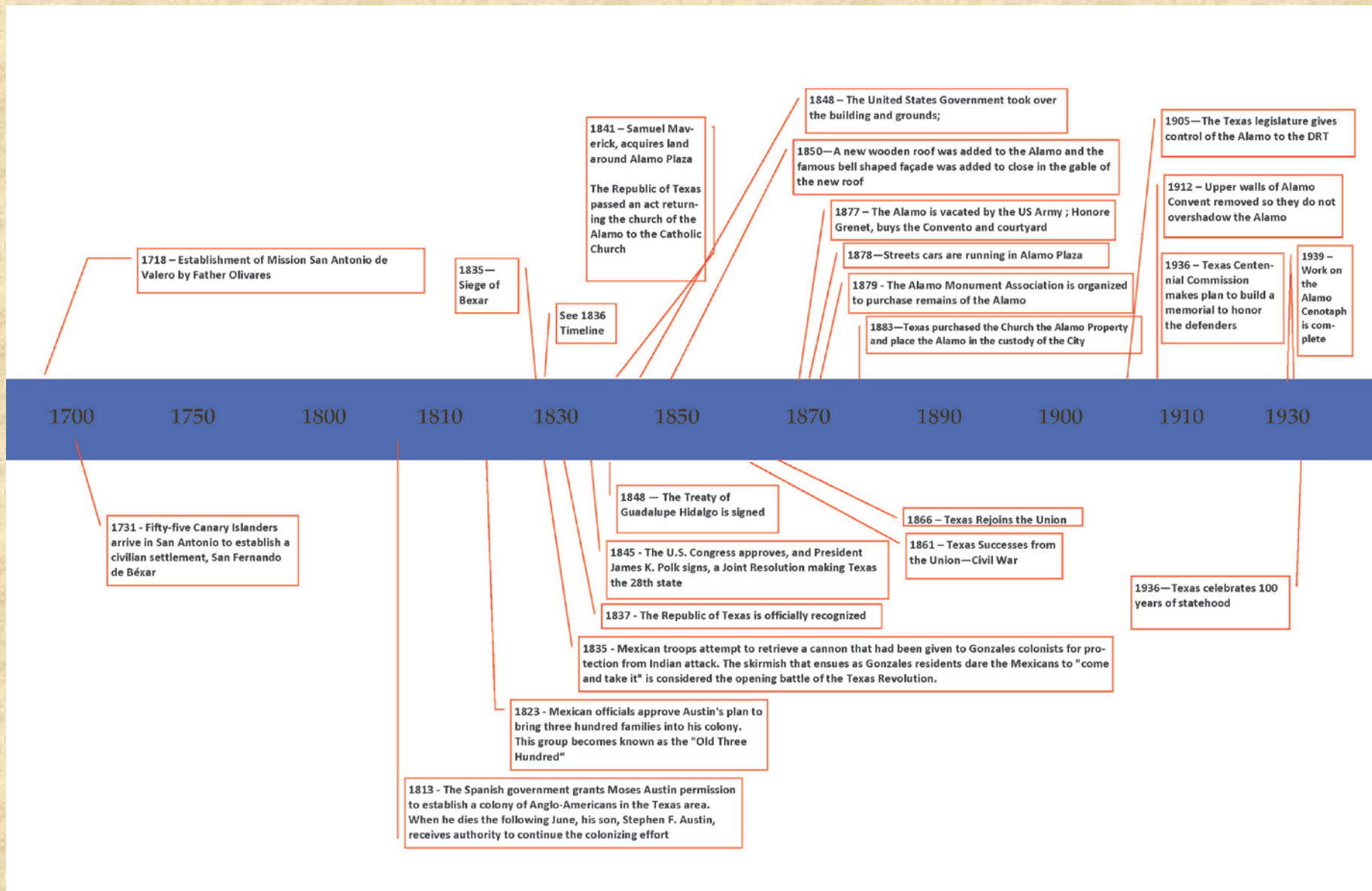


More than 2.5 million people visit the Alamo annually.* The Alamo Shrine (or Church) still stands in the spot as it did during the 1836 Battle. Alamo Plaza, the area in front of the Alamo was originally part of the Alamo's courtyard and mission compound.

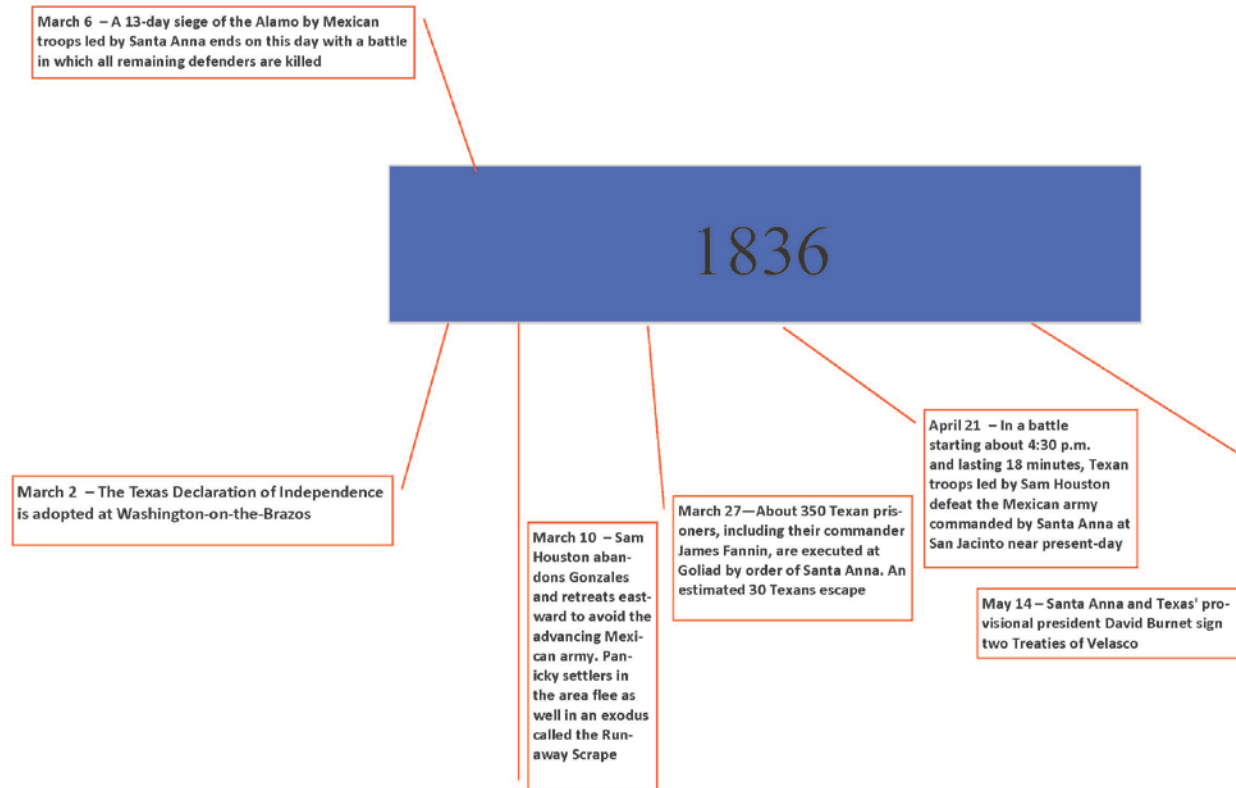
The Alamo was built in its current location in 1724 and was formally know as San Antonio de Valero.

*Visitation statistics per the Alamo Website www.thealamo.org

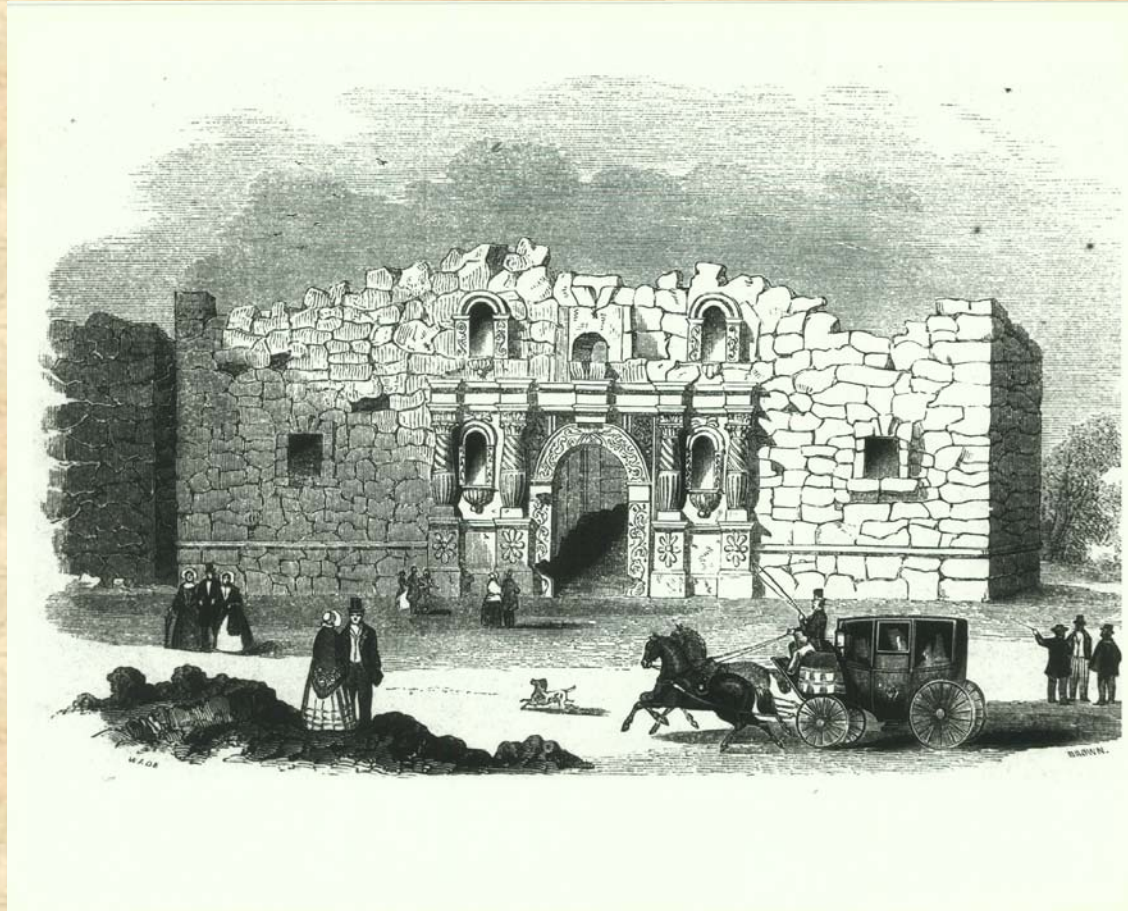
Timeline of Significant Alamo and Texas History Events



Timeline of Significant Events - 1836



At the time of the Battle, the Alamo did not have its classic bell shaped facade. In the years following the Battle, the Alamo stood in ruins.



Drawing of the Ruins of the Alamo

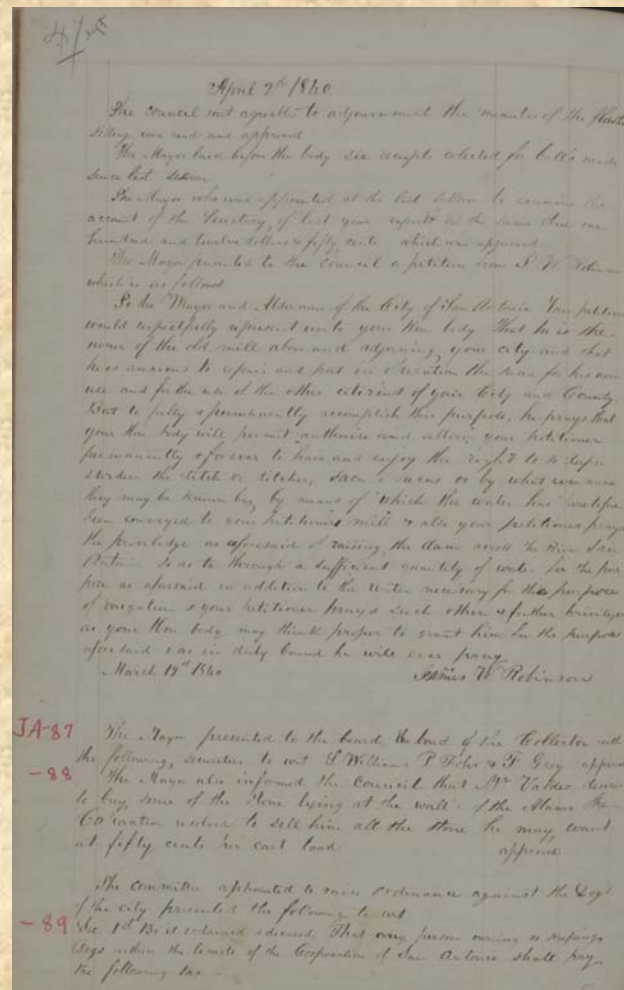
COSA Public Information Office Records – photo from UTSA's Institute of Texan Cultures, San Antonio, Texas

For Sale ...

Stones from The Alamo's Wall

After the Battle, the Alamo became ingrained in the memories of Texans. People in San Antonio and the surrounding communities longed for any item associated the battle ground. In 1840, it was approved by the City Council to sell stones from the Alamo Wall for .50 per cart load.

Stones from the Alamo were purchased by the Texas Legislature to build a memorial on the grounds of the State Capital.

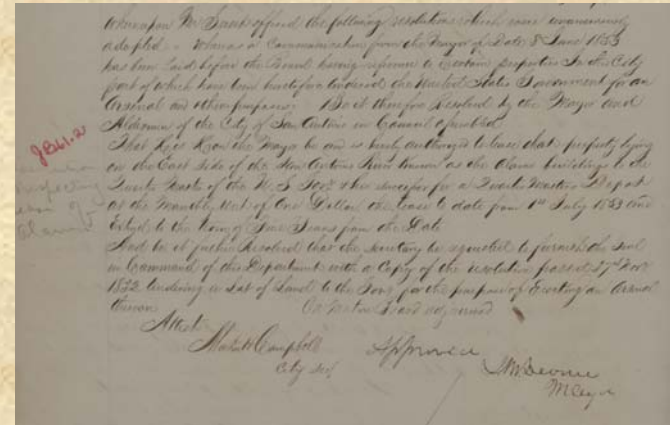


Office of the City Clerk, Council Journal Book A, 1837-1849,
April 2, 1840, Page 47

The US Army and The Alamo

The US Army arrived in San Antonio shortly before Texas became part of the Union. The US Army took an early interest in the Alamo and completed several early drawings of the buildings and grounds. In 1847 a plan to restore the Alamo, to make it useable for the US Army was carried out. The buildings were remodeled, a new wooden roof was added, the walls were reinforced, and face of the Alamo church was repaired; giving the Alamo its symbolic bell shaped facade.

On June 9, 1853 the City Council granted the US Army permission to use the Alamo as a quartermaster depot

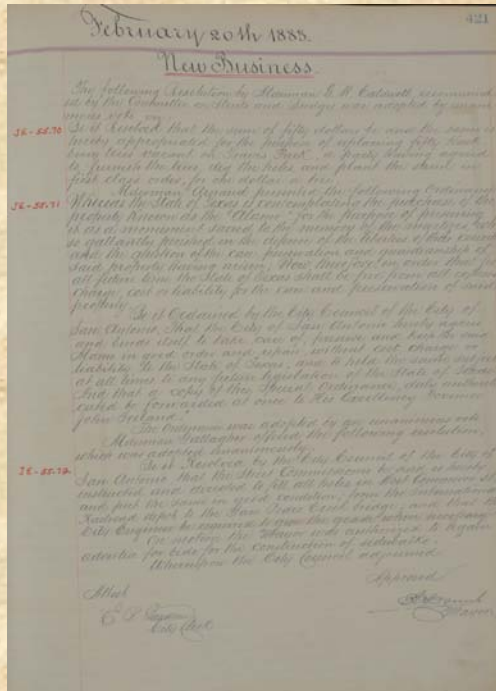


Council Journal
Book B,
1849-1856
June 9, 1853,
Page 222

The US Army moving into the Alamo after renovations have been completed



Custodianship of The Alamo

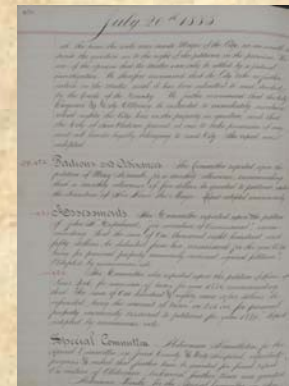
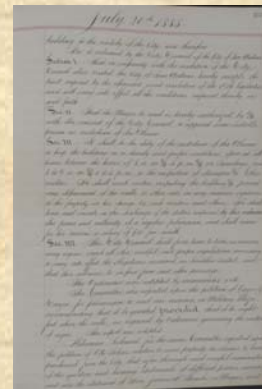


Office of the City Clerk, Council
Journal Book E, 1879 -1884,
February 20, 1883, Page 421

On February 20, 1883 the members of the City Council agreed that if the State of Texas purchased the Alamo, the City of San Antonio would take care of, preserve and keep the Alamo in good order.

After the 1836 Battle, the Alamo Church and grounds fell into ruins. Little attention was given to the Alamo's condition. In 1841 the Catholic Church was given custodianship by the Republic of Texas. When Texas was annexed the US Government took over the buildings and grounds. The Catholic Church still had a landlord role over the church and grounds. In 1883 the new Catholic Bishop of San Antonio transferred the Alamo to the State of Texas. The state then placed the Alamo in the custody of the City of San Antonio, on condition that the City care for the building and pay a custodian for that purpose.

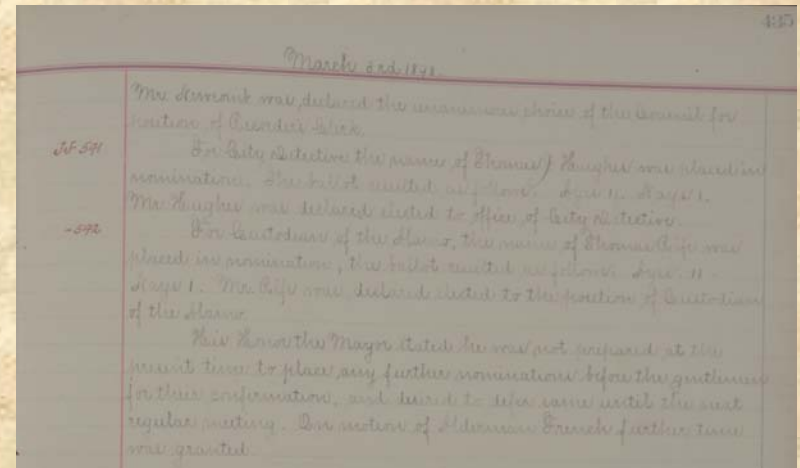
Through Ordinance #JF 481 on July 20, 1885 the City Council officially accepted custodianship of the Alamo from the State of Texas.



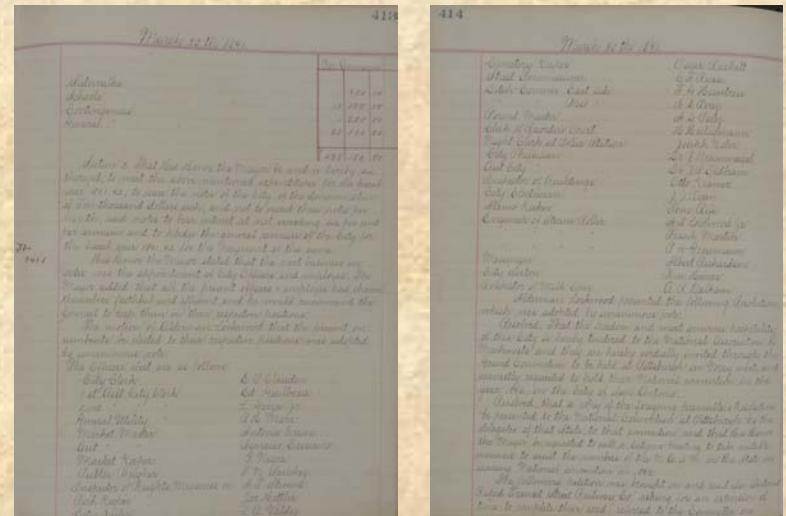
Office of the City Clerk, Council Journal Book F,
1884 -1886, July 20, 1885,
Pages 454 - 456

Custodianship of The Alamo

Immediately following the Alamo's transfer to the City of San Antonio, there was a push to rescue and clean up the Alamo and surrounding grounds. Citizen groups from St. Mark's Episcopal Church and the Alamo Monument Association were instrumental in the initiative. City leader Joseph Dwyer contributed a large collection of animals for the museum exhibit. Within six months of taking over the Alamo, the City opened the doors of the Alamo as a Shrine. In keeping with the agreement to care for the building, the City hired the Alamo's first Custodian Tom Rife on July 27, 1885. Tom Rife was a Veteran of the Texas War of Independence and former San Antonio Policeman. Until his death, he helped preserve and protect the Alamo.



Office of the City Clerk, Council Journal Book J, 1892 -1904,
March 3, 1893, Pages 435



Office of the City Clerk, Council Journal Book I, 1890 -1892,
March 30, 1891, Pages 413 - 414

[illegible]

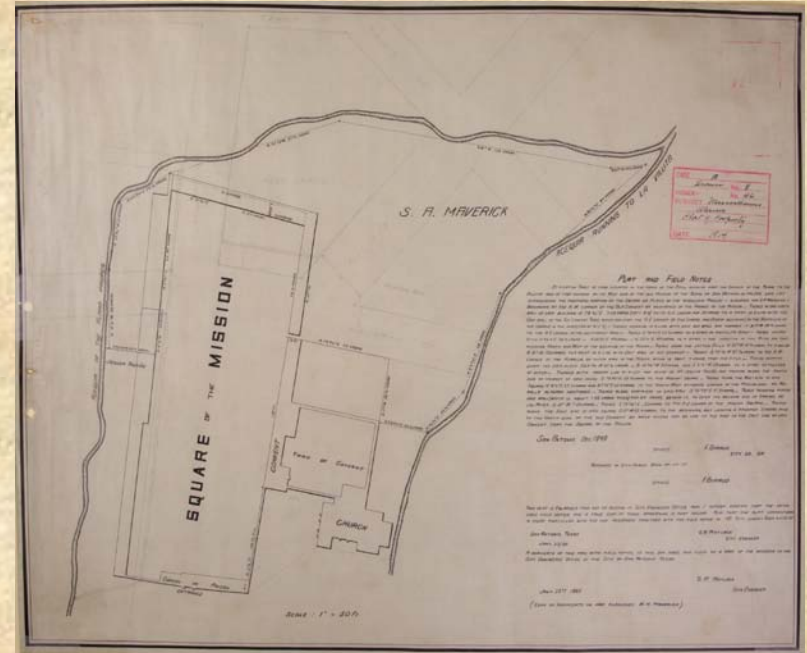
*Survey Book 1, Page 114 and 115 survey of Samuel
Maverick's land , 1849 by Francois Giraud, the City of
San Antonio Surveyor*

Samuel Maverick and Alamo City

The City Surveyor, Francois Giraud, first surveyed the area in 1849. The survey was completed on onion skin paper and places in Survey Book 1. The notes provide details about the property including notes on the old Alamo walls and acequia that ran on the property.

In 1885 City Surveyor, CP Matlack resurveyed the area and enlarged the survey. He noted on the original survey's accuracy.

The 1885 survey was then used in 1914 to show how streets and other buildings were developing around the Alamo.



City Engineers Records, Map of Plat and Field Notes of Alamo Property, 1885 and 1914, by G.P. Matlack, the City of San Antonio Surveyor

New life for the Convento

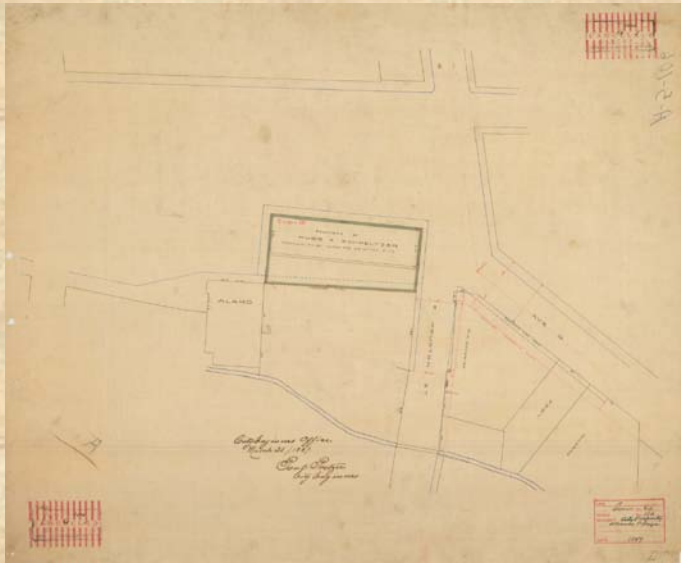
After the US Army moved out of the Alamo. The Catholic Church, the Alamo's landlord decided to sell the convento building. Honore Grenet purchased the building and setup a wholesale grocery in the building. He also leased the Alamo from the Catholic Church for a warehouse. Honore Grenet died unexpectedly in 1881. Grenet heirs sold the building to merchants Charles Hugo and Gustavo Schmeltzer.



Top: Shows the Hugo Schmeltzer Store next to the Alamo.

Bottom: This image show Alamo Plaza in the 1880s with the Market House in the foreground. Newly remodeled Hugo Schmeltzer Store in the background. New trolley tracks are seen to the left.

COSA, Public Information Office Records – Photos from UTSA's Institute of Texan Cultures, San Antonio, Texas



City Engineers Office Records, Map of City Property, Alamo Plaza, 1889

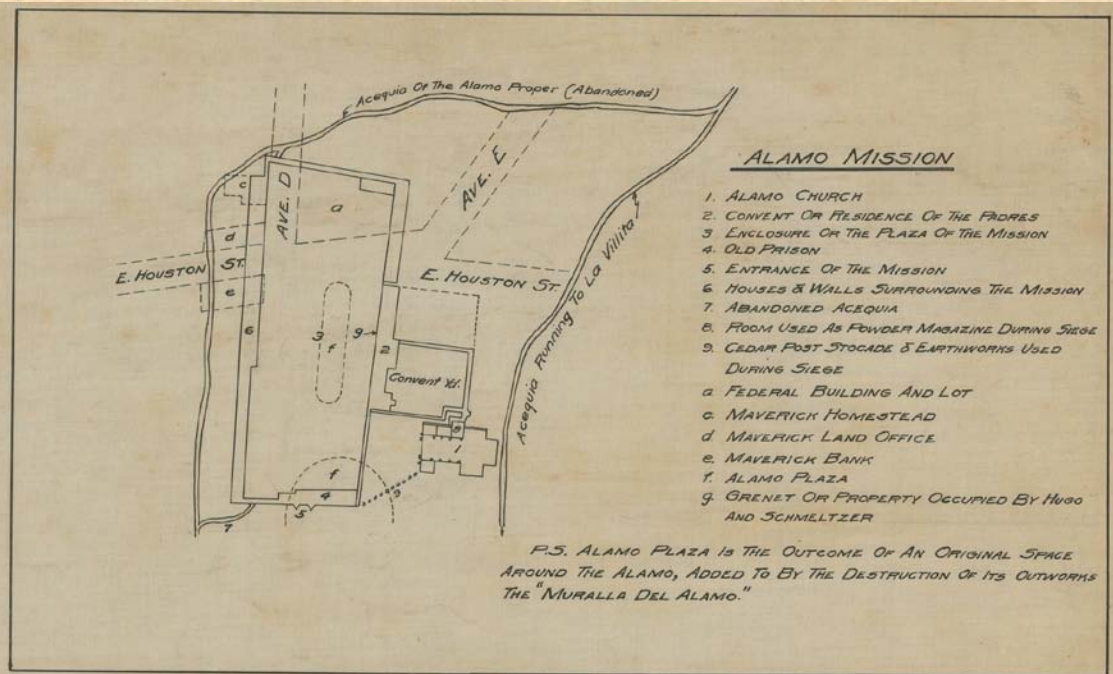


Early Map of Alamo Plaza



Completed by the City Engineers Office the map above shows a paving plan for Alamo Plaza. The map is not date but is estimated to be in late 1800s.

Development of Alamo Plaza



The City Engineers Office completed the map above detailing the main parts of the Alamo Mission: the acequias, City streets and the area that become Alamo Plaza. The date for this map is unknown but estimated around the 1880s.

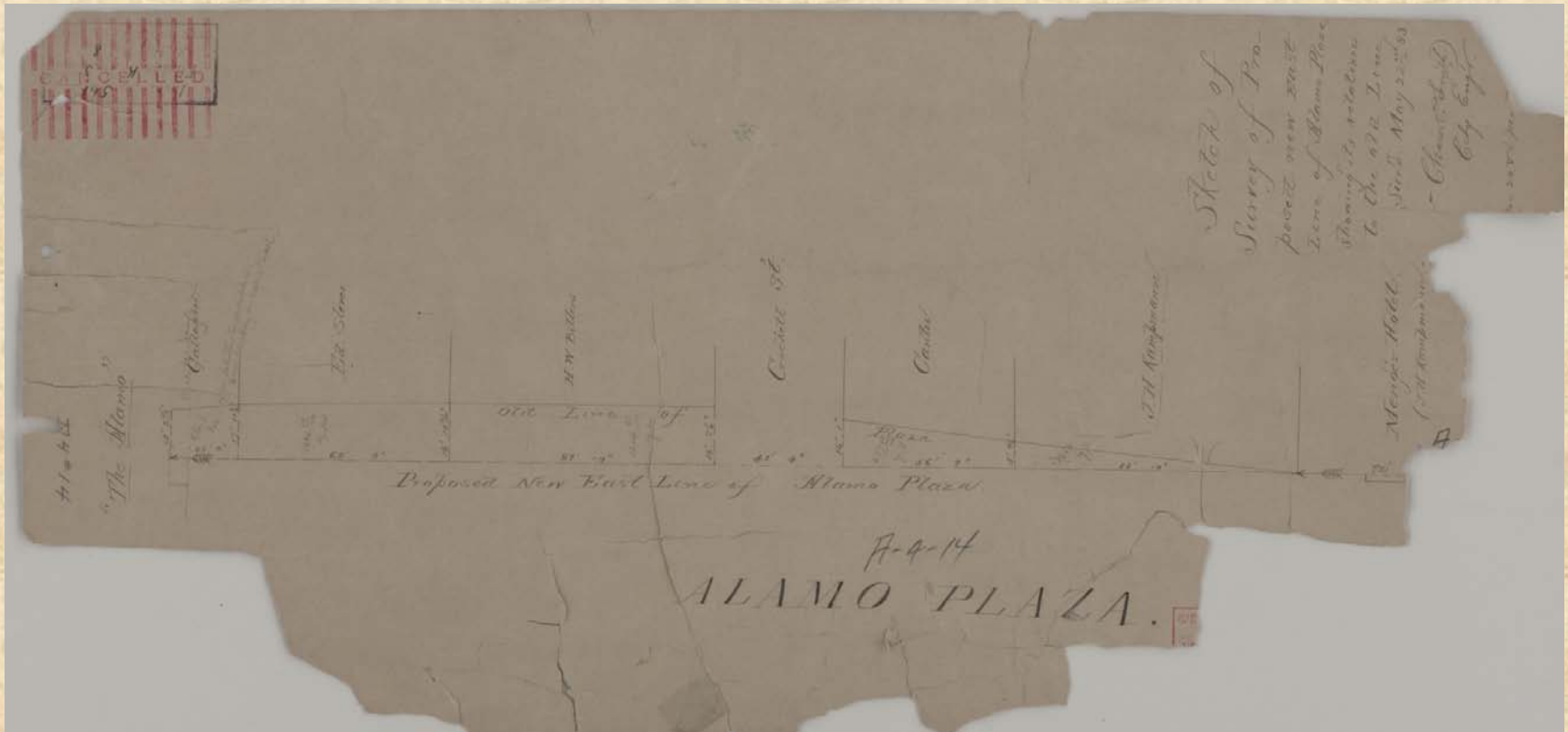
City Engineers Records, Map of Alamo Mission, date unknown

In 1888, Alderman Anton Wulff called for the building of four paved streets around the plaza and the landscaping of a garden in the center with multiple iron benches installed.



COSA, Public Information Office Records – photo from San Antonio Conservation Society

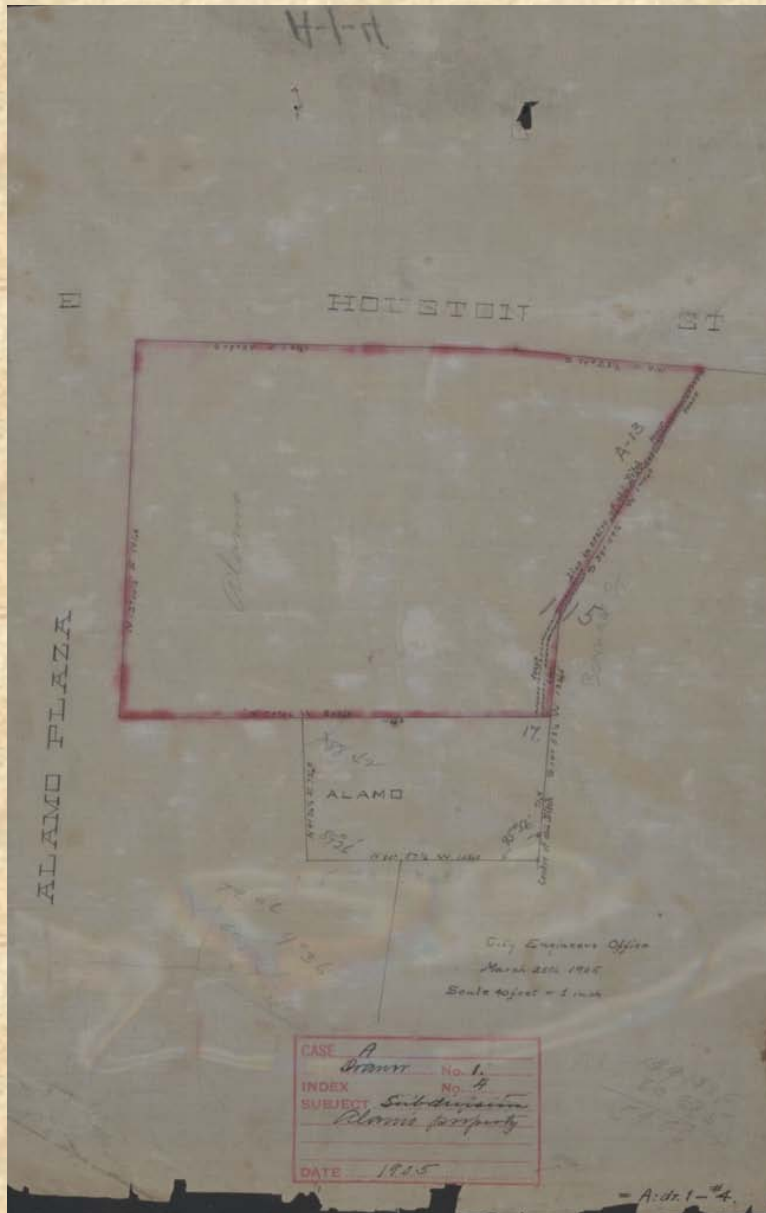
Development of Alamo Plaza



In 1883, the City was looking to extend the property line bounding Alamo Plaza. The City Engineer conducted a survey of Alamo Plaza. The survey above not only shows the proposed new lines for Alamo Plaza but in addition it shows the name of property owners and businesses.

City Engineers Records, Sketch of Survey of Proposed New East Line of Alamo Plaza, May 22, 1883

Development of Alamo Plaza



On March 25, 1905, the City Engineers Office completed the survey entitled "Subdivision of Alamo Property." The survey shows the Alamo Church building, the convento courtyard is highlighted in red. Noted on the survey are Alamo Plaza, Bonham Street, and East Houston Street. Various measurements are provided along with a note about the Alamo Ditch.

*City Engineers Records, Sketch of Survey of
Proposed New East Line of Alamo Plaza,
May 22, 1883*

Development of Alamo Plaza



When East Crockett Street was widened and extended the survey included much of the Alamo Property and Alamo Plaza. In addition to survey and engineering data needed for street improvements the maps also show businesses and property owner. Furthermore, map provides a scaled image of how the Alamo property and Alamo Plaza appeared in 1914.

City Engineers Records, Proposed Widening and Extension of East Crockett Street , 1914

Surveying and Urban Planning

City Block Numbers are an essential part of urban planning. In the planning and development of San Antonio the Alamo (church complex) was assigned City Block Number 115. Part of the Alamo Property and Alamo Plaza fall into the following City Block Numbers – 423, 143, 145.

Maps showing city block numbers are often detailed and show businesses and property owners. They also help capture changes to the property over time.



“Map Showing CB 156, 160, 159, 908, 148, 416, 423, 914, 145, 108, 116, 405 and 406” provides an unique perspective for it shows property owners and businesses located on Alamo Plaza, across from the Alamo.

Surveying and Urban Planning

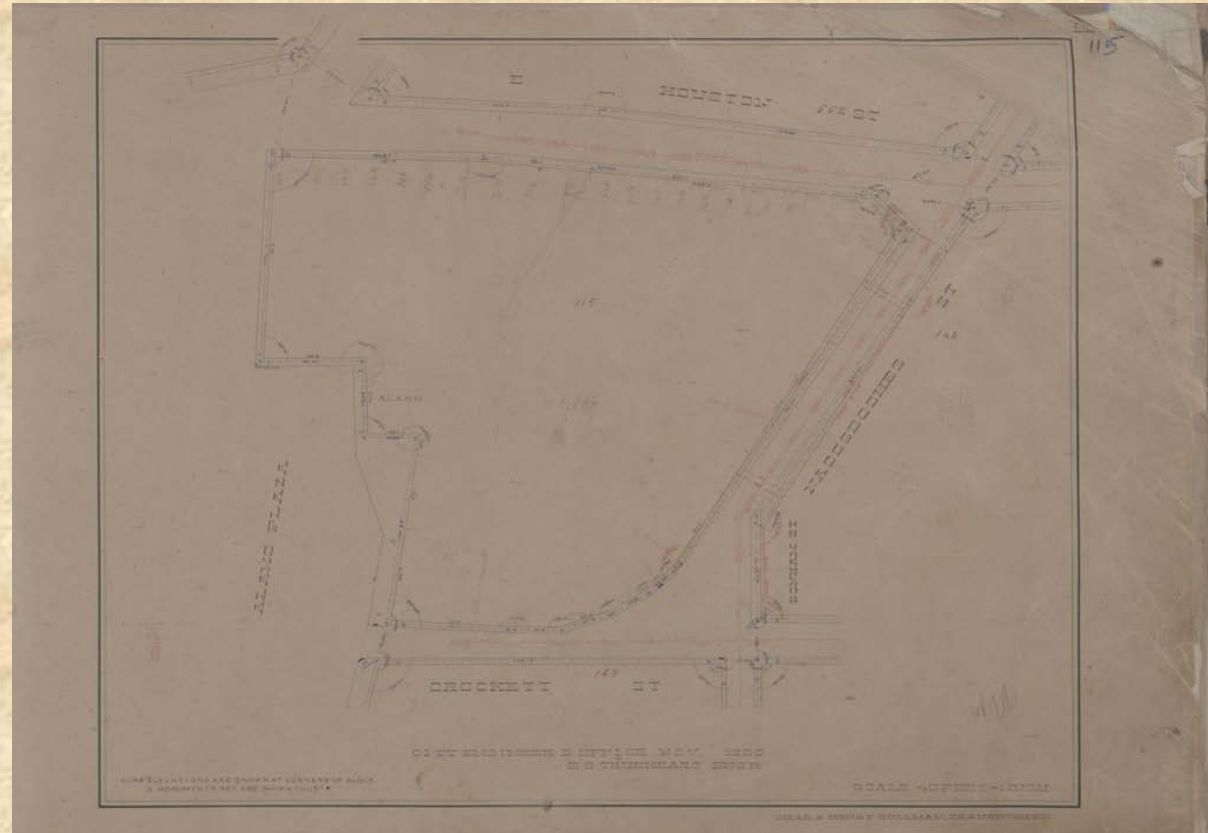


“Plat of CB 115 Showing Alamo Church Property and Adjoining Buildings” shows the Alamo Church, Plaza, other buildings and notes property owners. While the map is not dated, it was likely created in mid-1920s. The map provides information on the Alamo’s construction such as, fire proof construction, it was rebuilt in 1918, has stone walls, a reinforced concrete roof and earth floor.

Trueheart Surveys of the Alamo

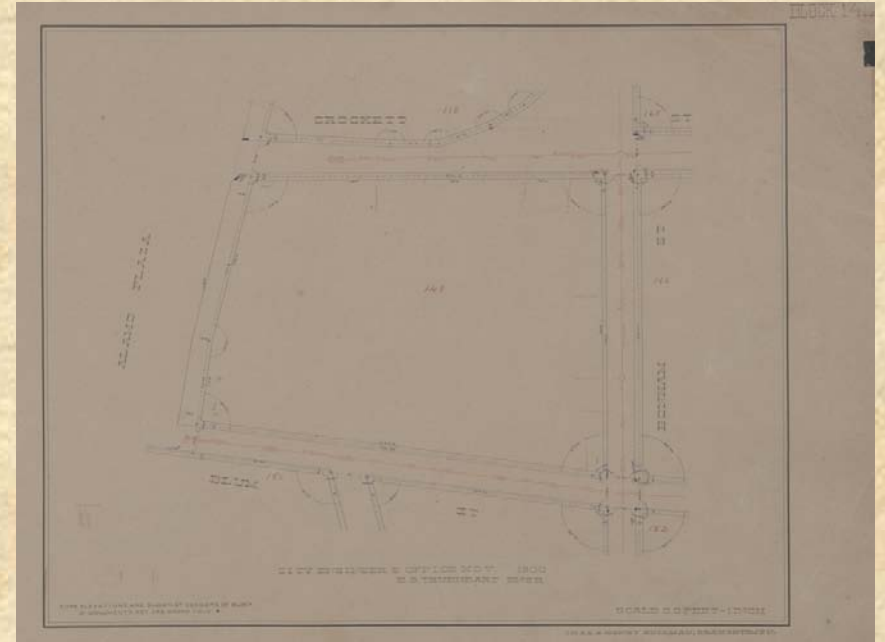
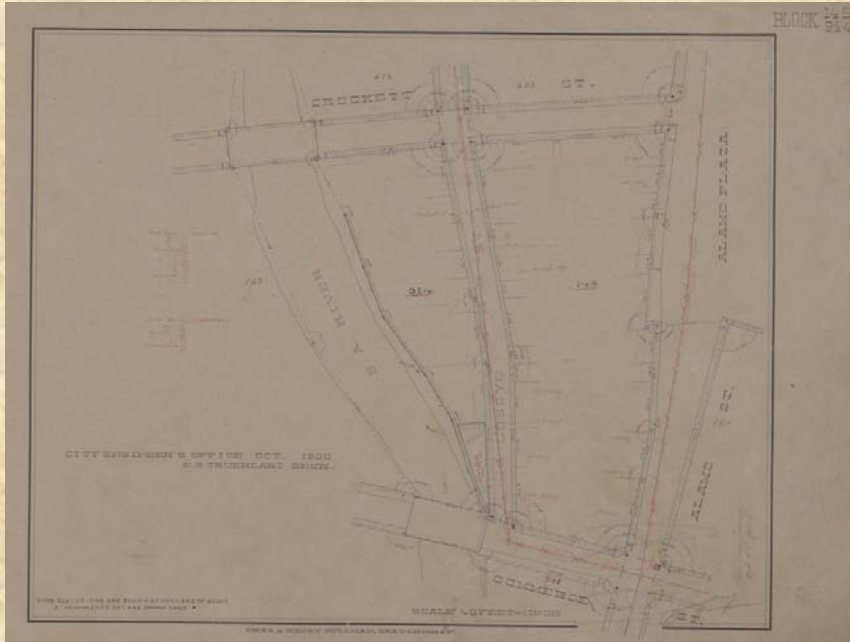
Edward G. Trueheart was the City Engineer from 1899 to 1901. During his tenure he produced several surveys of city blocks through the City. Several of the surveys show the Alamo and Alamo Plaza.

The map to the right, shows the Alamo complex (NCB 115) and adjacent streets.



*City Engineers Office, Engineer's Office Block Maps Book XX,
Page 115, November 1, 1900*

Trueheart Surveys of the Alamo

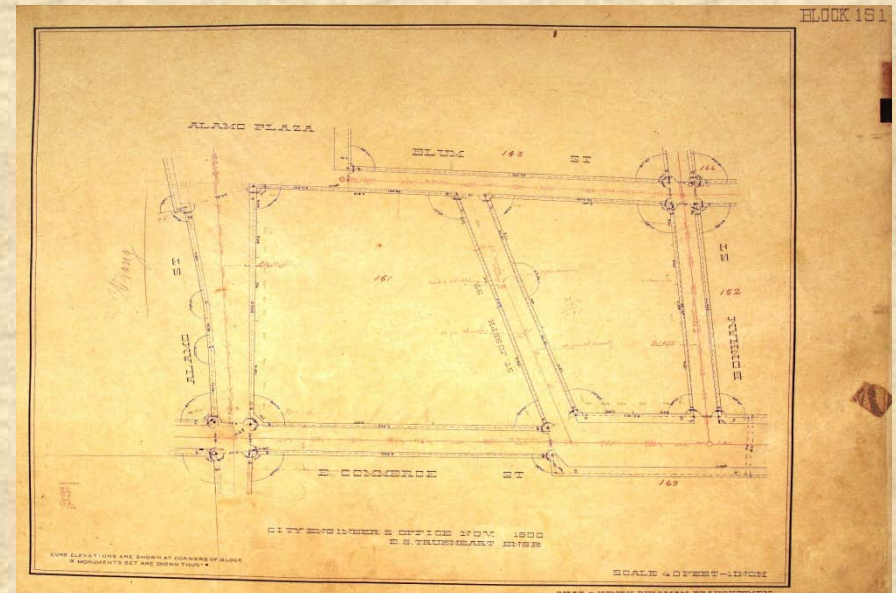


Completed by Edward Trueheart the Block Maps capture the Alamo Plaza and the Alamo Property from different perspectives

Top Left: *City Engineers Office, Engineer's Office Block Maps Book XX, Page 145 914, October 1, 1900*

Top Right: *Top Left: City Engineers Office, Engineer's Office Block Maps Book XX, Page 140, November 1, 1900*

Bottom Right: *Top Left: City Engineers Office, Engineer's Office Block Maps Book XX, Page 151, November 1, 1900*

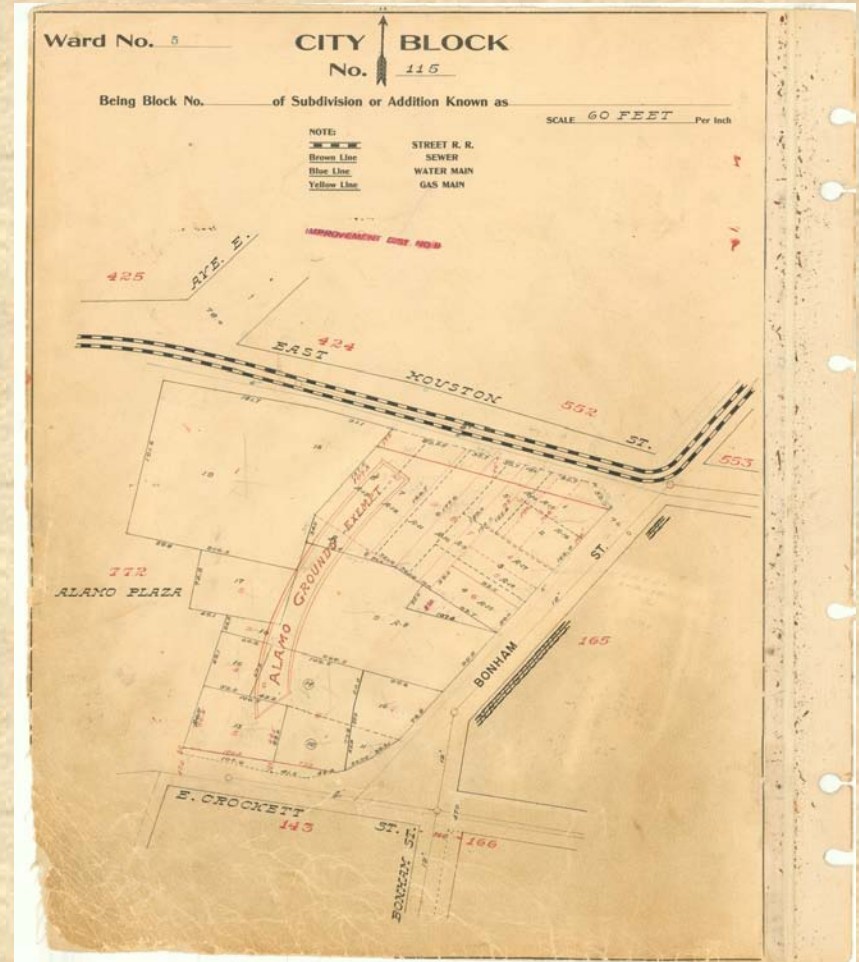


Tax Maps

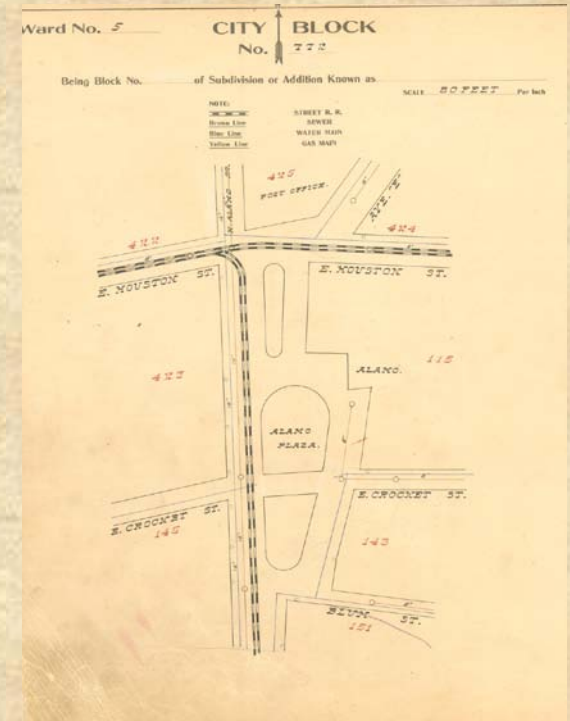
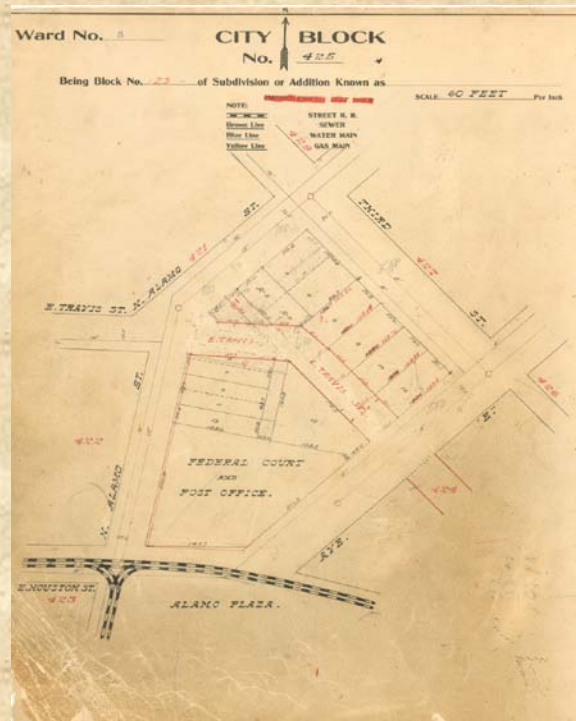
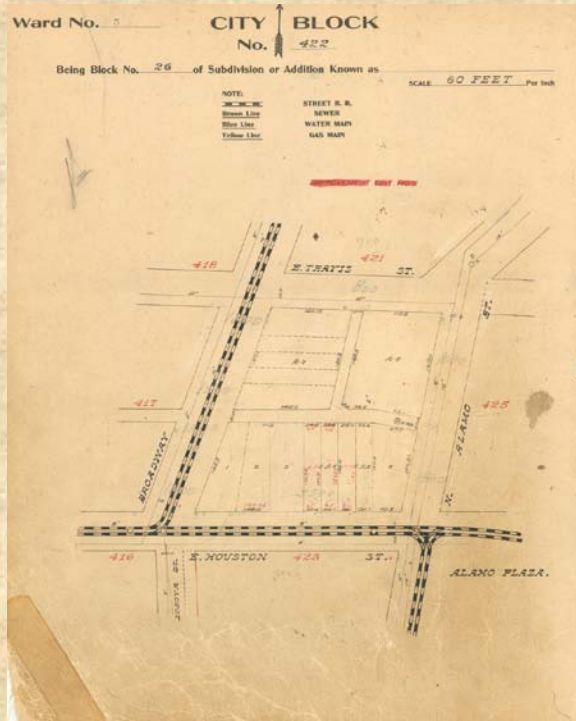
The City Block Tax Maps show the lot lines, the block and lot numbers, the street names, lot dimensions, and easements of property within the city limits.

Broken down by City Block Number the maps provide another way of looking at the Alamo property.

Right : New City Block Plat Map Books (100) City Block # 115



Tax Maps



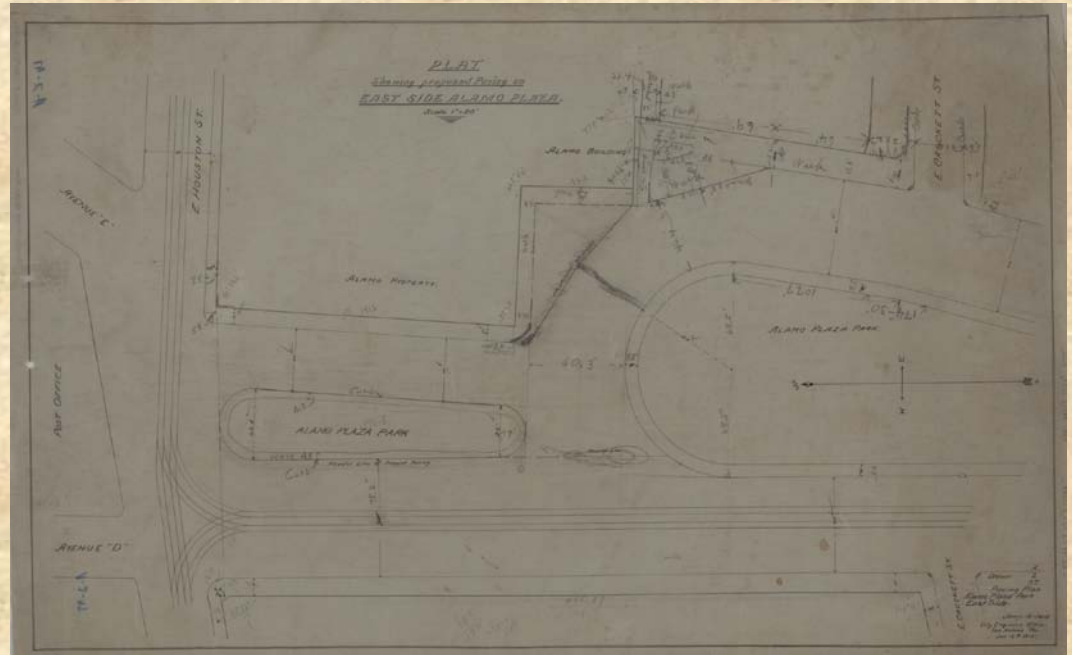
Left: New City Block Plat Map Books (400) City Block # 442

Middle: New City Block Plat Map Books (400) City Block # 425

Right: New City Block Plat Map Books (700) City Block # 772

Renovations and Beautification of Alamo Plaza

In the early 1900s the area around the Alamo began to change again. The second floor to the convento building was removed in 1912. Alamo Plaza was repaved in 1915. In the 1930s the grassy square and flagstones were installed in front of the Alamo Church. Also during this time the Alamo Church received a new roof and extensive landscaping was done throughout the Alamo Complex. By 1935 beautifications were complete and the Alamo began to take on it's familiar look.



Map Above: City Engineers Office Records, Plat showing proposed Paving on East Side of Alamo Plaza, January 12, 1915

Left: COSA, Public Information Office Records – photo from UTSA's Institute of Texan Cultures, San Antonio, Texas, San Antonio Light Collection; Express News Collection

Aerial View of Alamo Plaza - 1931



In 1931 aerial photos of Alamo Plaza was taken from a blimp over downtown. The photos show a unique perspective of the Alamo Complex and Alamo Plaza.

Left: This image shows the three gardens which make up Alamo Plaza. This image also shows showing buildings and how streets flowed into and around the Alamo Complex.

Middle: In this image the remolded convento area and courtyard to the left of the Alamo Church is shown.

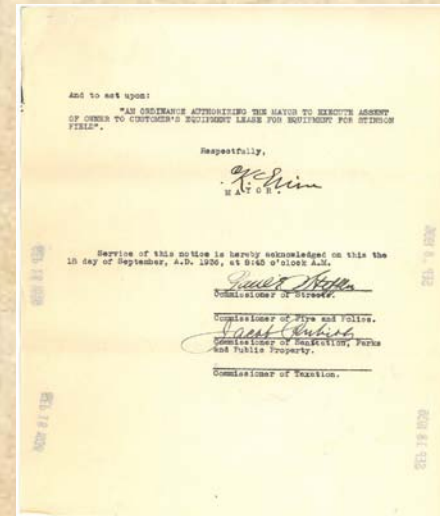
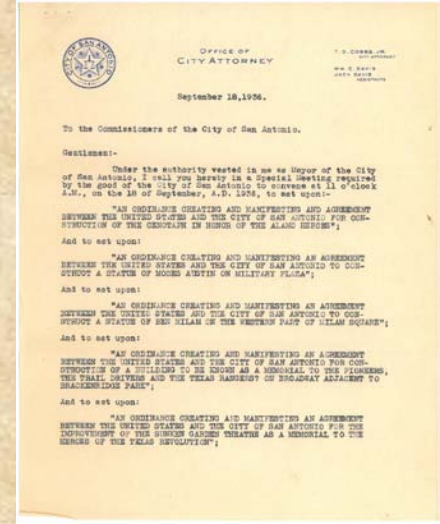
Right: This image provides a good perspective of how cars moved around Alamo Plaza.

COSA, Public Information Office Records – photos from UTSA's Institute of Texan Cultures, San Antonio, Texas, San Antonio Light Collection

The Alamo and the Texas Centennial



One hundred years after the battle and after Texas won it's independence from Mexico, people came from near and far to celebrate and remember. The Alamo became backdrop for many of the celebrations; a large flag-draped platform was setup in front of the convento. The Catholic Church was an active participant in the celebrations and even hosted a church service in front of the Alamo. Flags from the defenders origins were also on display, along with a military guard. In honor of the Centennial, President Roosevelt visited the Alamo in June of 1936. The Texas Centennial Commission announced plans for the erection of a memorial in honor of the Alamo defenders. In September, the City Council backed the plan for memorial, the Alamo Cenotaph, along with several others throughout the City.



The Alamo Cenotaph

In 1939 construction was completed on the Alamo Cenotaph. On the North end of Alamo Plaza, the Cenotaph, according to tradition the marks the spot where the slain defenders of the fortified mission were piled after the battle and burned in great funeral pyres. Seen on the sides of the Cenotaph are carvings of the Alamo defenders, including depictions of William B. Travis, Jim Bowie, Davy Crockett and James B. Bonham. The monument also bears the names of men who died at the Alamo.

In addition, the following inscription can be found on the revered memorial:

Erected in Memory of the Heroes who sacrificed their lives at the Alamo, March 6, 1836 in the defense of Texas, "They chose never to surrender nor retreat, these brave hearts with flag still proudly waving perished in the flames of immortality that their high sacrifice might lead to the founding on this Texas."

